



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## Six Minutes for a Birth Certificate

*New Citizen Service Centers cut waiting times by up to 50%*

When Radomir Marcar, a pensioner from Sokolac, needed documents to prove his citizenship, he never expected the process would be so quick.

"Today has been great," he said. "I finished everything in six minutes. It's a rarity to find such fast service."

The service was provided by Gorazde's new Citizen Service Center, better known as a "One Stop Shop" (OSS). OSS's dramatically reduce waiting times for citizens by consolidating customer service for the entire municipality at one location. Says Gorazde Mayor Mustafa Kurtovic, "People used to have to traipse from the ground floor to the third floor to the second floor... Now they can complete their business in one place in just a few

minutes. That makes citizens feel they are worth something."

Gorazde's OSS is part of the \$20 million Government Accountability Project (GAP) jointly funded by USAID and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The project is helping improve the services of 40 local govern-



ments throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina.

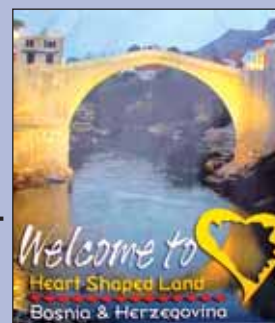
In Gorazde, over 7,000 people pass through the OSS each month. Of those, 1,200 file requests. Therefore, efficiency is a top priority. For example, every employee has access

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## BiH Tourism Heats Up

Attendance at international fairs sparks interest in BiH as new destination

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## Tuzla Pioneers Foster Program

Children in crisis go to homes rather than institutions

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Heljda Eko staff Biljana Bajramovic and Denis Hrnicevic celebrate World Healthy Food Day with a display of Heljda foods in Mercator

## Organic Buckwheat Wins New Markets

**S**amir Mehonic and Vesna Latifovic were in a unique position. Their organic buckwheat products had just won the "Golden Rose" prize for best new product of the year at an international food fair in Sarajevo. Yet their resources were stretched so thin that they had had to stop production.

That's where USAID's Linking Agriculture Markets and Producers (LAMP) stepped in. A LAMP employee had seen their display at the fair and encouraged them to apply for a grant.

Says Latifovic, "Our first application was rejected and the LAMP team actually cried with us. Then they helped us

improve our business plan and our second application was successful."

The grant helped Mehonic and Latifovic

**"I can honestly say that Heljda Eko produces some of the best food in the country. My friends and I personally consume Heljda everyday."**

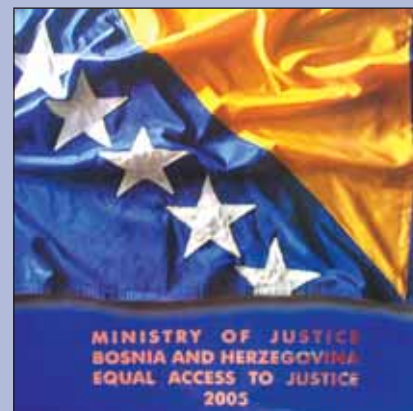
**--Sukrija Huseinovic, Eurofarm General Manager**

to purchase a factory and equip it with pasta-making equipment. In addition, their company, Heljda Eko Sarajevo,

## JUSTICE

### BiH MOJ Develops Action Plan

The BiH Ministry of Justice (MOJ) developed its first strategic plan and a rule book for drafting laws with the direct assistance of USAID's Justice Sector Development Project (JSDP). The documents will enable the



Ministry to plan ahead, identify priorities, and efficiently use its resources when performing its functions; prepare better laws; ensure better judicial cooperation between BiH and other countries; and explain to the public the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry.

makes 20 other products including buckwheat flour, tinctures, pillows and honey. Everything is gluten free meaning it is high in energy and low in fat--very healthy for children and the elderly. Moreover, buckwheat is well known for helping to improve blood circulation disorders.

Heljda Eko has provided raw ingredients for Eurofarm products for some time now. But recently the company took a great leap forward when it won a contract to supply its products to Mercator supermarkets throughout BiH.

## NEWS IN BRIEF ♦ NEWS IN BRIEF ♦ NEWS IN BRIEF ♦ NEWS IN BRIEF

♦ U.S. restrictions against working in Foca were lifted this year, allowing the Governance Accountability Project (GAP) to formally introduce Foca as the 41st partner municipality under the jointly funded USAID and Sida GAP. Foca will benefit from a wide range of technical and material assistance that will provide improved citizen services, better financial management and municipal budgeting,

grant funds for small community development projects selected locally, as well as guidance in strategic and urban planning.

♦ USAID's Cluster Competitiveness Activity project held the first conference on cultural tourism in Sarajevo since the end of the war. The conference name "One Million Visitors", refers to the number of tourists visiting Sarajevo during the post-Olympic period prior to the conflict.

Conference goals included increasing visits by this summer, and recovering the one million visitors level again by 2009.

♦ USAID's Parliamentary Program with the RS National Assembly (RSNA) organized a graduation ceremony for interns from the fifth cycle of its internship program. The interns were introduced to the work of the RSNA, its committees and roles of the parliament members.



# DUTCH TOURISTS PLAN SUMMER HOLIDAYS IN BIH

## BiH display at Utrecht Tourism Fair attracts widespread attention

**F**or the first time, a Dutch tourism agency will include excursions to BiH as part of its summer tour offerings. "The agree-

ment will bring groups of 50 tourists at a time from Holland to BiH as soon as this summer", said Ermin Lipovic of Bihac-based Una-Kiro Rafting (UKR).

"Five more Dutch tour operators agreed to visit BiH to see what is available and design tourist trips for their customers," added Lipovic.

The agreements were forged at the Utrecht, Holland "Vakantiebeurs" Tourism Fair where USAID's Cluster



Tour operator Harry Braam plans excursions to Bihac, Cazin, Mostar and Sarajevo for his Dutch clients

"I was pleasantly surprised by the Bosnian stand in Utrecht. Yours is a marvelous country."

--Harry Braam of the Nederlandse Christelijke Reis-vereniging travel agency.

Competitiveness Activity (CCA) sponsored a joint exhibition by BiH tourism firms.

"I have been trying to put together an organized trip to BiH ever since 1996 and this year, thanks to the information I received at the Bosnian stand, I will finally do it," said Harry Braam of the Nederlandse Christelijke Reis-vereniging travel agency.

USAID believes fairs are one of the best ways to inform the global tourism community about BH products.

### MBA



SARAJEVO GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The Sarajevo Graduate School of Business is accepting applications in cycles which end on May 31 and July 31. A total of 30 students will be accepted into the English-language Master's Program. For more information please contact SGSB on (033) 560 100 or visit SGSB's website : [www.sgsb.edu.ba](http://www.sgsb.edu.ba).

### Wood Processing



USAID's Cluster Competitiveness Activity is supporting students from Sarajevo's Academy of Art to produce their designs and exhibit them at Trade Fairs throughout the region. Recently the students won a competition for a free display at the International Furniture Fair in Cologne Germany.

### School Repair



The repair of Trnopolje Elementary School in Prijedor Municipality supported the return of Bosniaks to this majority Serb municipality. This multi-ethnic school is attended by 250 pupils out of whom 50 are Bosniaks, 180 are Serbs and 20 Ukrainians. The school is fully integrated.

# Foster Families Offer Homes to Children in Crisis



**Brothers Samir and Ante are adjusting well to life with their foster family**

**W**hen Halida and Jasmin Avdic applied to become foster parents, they were looking to fill the void created by their daughter's departure to become an au pair in the U.S. Little did they expect that her place would soon be filled by not one but *three* energetic little boys. Ante, 11, Samir, 9, and their little brother Damir, 8, were thrust into a crisis situation when their mother had to be hospitalized long-term. Fortunately, the boys' social worker, Bozo Stjepic, understood

the importance of placing them with a family instead of in an orphanage. The foster family program is supported by USAID and implemented by Save the Children UK with Tuzla Canton institutions. Its goal is to place children deprived of parental care into homes rather than institutions. According to SCUK's Tuzla office director Jasmina Selimovic, the foster program requires extensive training of families and follow up by social workers. At first it's not always clear why extra resources

should be used when there are spaces available in institutions. "We say the focus must be on what's best for the children, not the bureaucracy," says Selimovic. "When social workers see how much better the children do in a family setting, they strive to place children with families despite the extra work it causes them."

Says Stjepic, "A foster family can provide more love and attention than an institution. Our foster mothers go to parents meetings, help the children study, take them to see specialists—everything a biological mother would do." Halida



**Jalida Avdic and her three foster children outside their Tuzla home**

Avdic agrees. Although taking three new children into her home hasn't been easy ("I'm just learning how to get all the meals cooked on time," she laughs), she and her husband consider the boys an integral part of their family. "Even our dog has accepted them and eats out of their hands," she says. Avdic wishes more families would consider fostering. "I think that more children should enter this program earlier so they can avoid trauma," she says.

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to a document tracking system that shows the exact status of every request filed. So citizens do not have to always seek out the person who originally took their request. Recently, Gorazde Cantonal TV conducted a survey on citizens' opinions about the OSS. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive.



**Radomir Macar at Gorazde's OSS**

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